

The President's Daily Brief

22 November 1971

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Soviets have taken a positive approach during Secretary Stans visit in Moscow. (Page 1)

President Yahya appears to believe that a political solution in East Pakistan is the only workable one, but, according to Ambassador Farland, Yahya may be getting agitated over the continuing failure to find a way to settle the crisis. (Page 2)

Le Duc Tho, the North Vietnamese peace talks negotiator, may be returning to Paris, perhaps with some new initiative in hand. (Page 3)

The current spate of fighting continues in Cambodia with no particular progress for government forces reported (page 4), while in Laos both sides are preparing for dry season offensives (page 5).

Egyptian President Sadat's tough speeches to front-line troops are undoubtedly designed to create additional international pressure on Israel to move toward a settlement. (Page 6)

A North Vietnamese MIG-21 nearly shot down a B-52 over Laos. (Page 7)

Part of the Soviet task force in Cuban waters has put to sea. (Page 7)

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USSR-US

The Soviets have taken pains to set a positive tone for the current visit of Secretary Stans. During over three hours of private talks with Secretary Stans on Saturday, Soviet Premier Kosygin broached specific ideas for realizing his expressed hope that the visit would lead to a substantial increase in economic relations. Reflecting the priority Moscow attaches to expanded bilateral ties, Kosygin proposed that working groups of experts be set up to discuss various facets of a new economic relationship. He suggested that they deal with financial and trade matters, science and technology, and such projects as joint development of Soviet natural resources.

Kosygin proposed that after three or four months of deliberation, the findings and recommendations of such working groups might be readied for conclusion on the occasion of President Nixon's visit to the USSR. The Soviet Premier volunteered the opinion that political relations between the USSR and US would be still further improved by that time.

Soviet media have reported factually on the Stans-Kosygin meeting and noted that Secretary Stans gave Kosygin a letter from President Nixon concerning development of bilateral economic relations. TASS pointed out that the letter was received "with satisfaction."

During the Stans party's more detailed talks with economic and trade officials over the next several days, it may become clearer whether the Soviets have significantly modified their attitudes on the problems that have inhibited bilateral economic relations. Short of hard currency and with West European credit sources quite fully utilized, Moscow may indicate its willingness to make certain concessions to American business practices in order to attract capital and know-how.

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INDIA-PAKISTAN

President Yahya told Ambassador Farland last Thursday that East Pakistan will be given so much provincial autonomy that support for the government will increase there. Yahya added that once a civilian government is established--presumably in early January--it will be of "no concern" to him whether the government wants to deal with Mujibur Rahman. Yahya asserted that Prime Minister Gandhi, not Mujib, is the key to a solution.

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Yahya appears to believe that his plans for a political solution to the East Pakistan crisis are the only means of extricating himself from an untenable situation. Ambassador Farland reports that he sensed in Yahya the first signs of agitation. The president said that recent Indian incursions into East Pakistan were enough to start a war, but that it would be foolhardy for Pakistan to initiate hostilities. He observed that it is equally foolhardy for India to prod Pakistan--whose cause is "self-survival"--into war.

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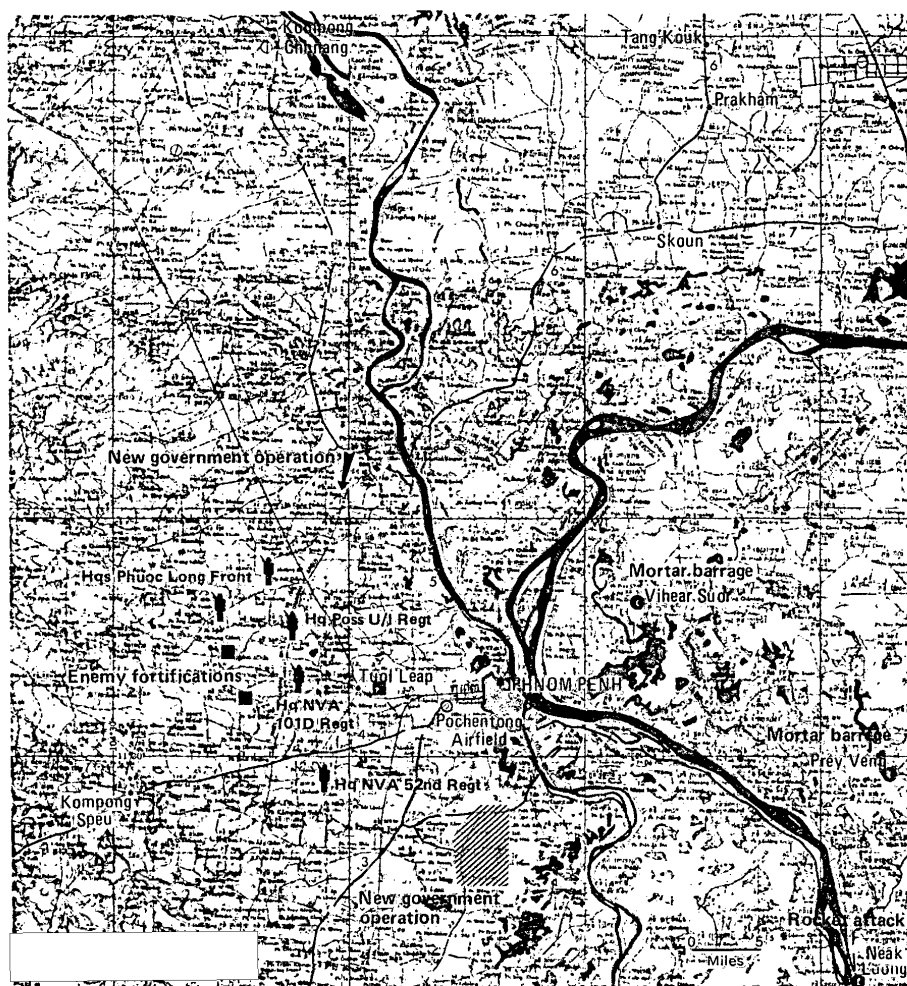
NORTH VIETNAM

The French have told the US delegation in Paris that Le Duc Tho, the politburo-level "adviser" to the North Vietnamese delegation at the peace talks, was given a visa for France late last week. They have no information on the date of his departure, which they understand has been delayed by illness, but they believe he will be coming shortly.

Tho's appearance in Paris has often in the past coincided with new Communist moves in the negotiations. Most recently, he was on hand when the Viet Cong surfaced their seven-point proposal last July, but left for Hanoi when it became clear that the announcement of President Nixon's prospective visit to Peking had upstaged the Communist initiative.

The seven points, particularly as Tho himself enlarged on them in an interview during his Paris stay, left certain aspects vague and seemed generally designed to convey a conciliatory impression. In the last two months, however, Hanoi has used tougher language and made its demands more explicit. Most recently, Premier Pham Van Dong while in Peking on an official visit emphasized the inseparability of the first two of the seven points--on withdrawal of US troops and on ending aid to President Thieu. Dong was very explicit on the necessity that the US withdrawal be total. Thus, any new Communist move in Paris seems likely to continue the trend toward increased rigidity. The Communists might try to offset the generally adverse effect of this line with a more forthcoming attitude on the prisoner issue, particularly in the hope of influencing US public opinion.

CAMBODIA: Phnom Penh Area



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CAMBODIA

Government troops entered Tuol Leap village unopposed over the weekend, but are meeting sporadic enemy resistance elsewhere near Phnom Penh. These troops, elements of a twice-reorganized task force, were to remain at Tuol Leap and await further orders--expected today--to move against nearby Communist positions. New clearing operations are already under way north and south of the capital.

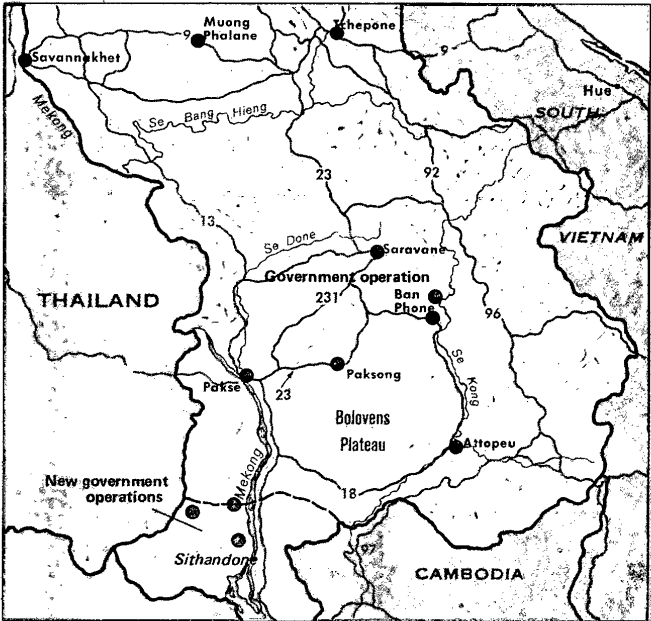
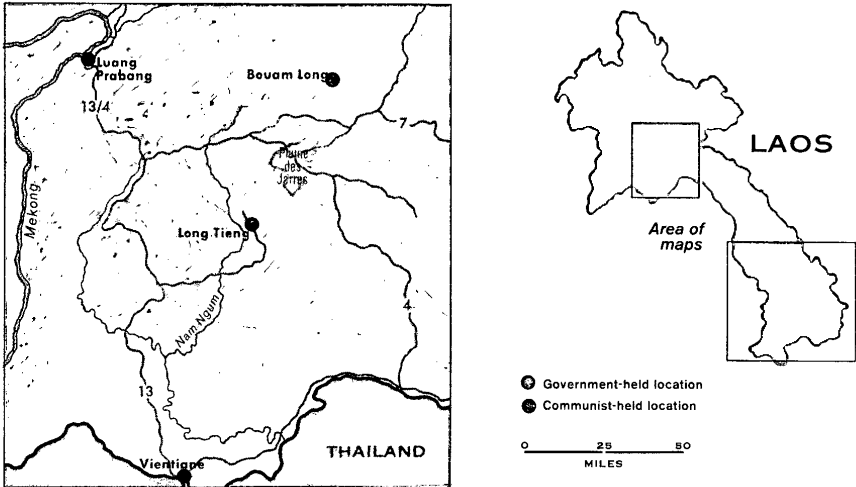
Elements of the Communists' Phuoc Long Front, however, are still located within about 15 miles of Phnom Penh, according to radio direction finding.

extensive enemy bunkers and other installations in the area along with signs of substantial Communist troop movement.

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Enemy forces also are active east of the Mekong. Heavy mortar barrages have hit Vihear Suor and the town of Prey Veng during the past few days, and a few long-range 122-mm. rockets hit an allied logistics base at Neak Luong.

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LAOS

The pace of military activity is quickening as both sides prepare for the North Vietnamese dry season offensive.

The North Vietnamese have recently increased their probes and shelling attacks on irregular positions and fire support bases along the northern and eastern edges of the Plaine des Jarres. They are also continuing to bring additional men and supplies into north Laos. New personnel groups have been detected entering the Route 7 infiltration corridor, and, although precise troop strengths are not available, some 5,000-6,000 troops have headed toward the Plaine in the last five weeks. Rear service logistic units are also moving supplies at a faster pace, and intercepted messages report steady vehicle activity delivering supplies to forward units near the Plaine.

In south Laos the government launched three operations over the weekend in an effort to keep Communist forces off balance and to disrupt their supply and troop concentrations. Four irregular battalions were airlifted into an area just north of Ban Phone, one of the major North Vietnamese logistic centers northeast of the Bolovens Plateau; one battalion cleared the town, and the group set up camp in the vicinity. The other two operations are aimed at clearing North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces from operating areas south of Pakse in Sithandone Province. No enemy resistance has yet been encountered, but a strong Communist reaction is likely, particularly to the Ban Phone operation.

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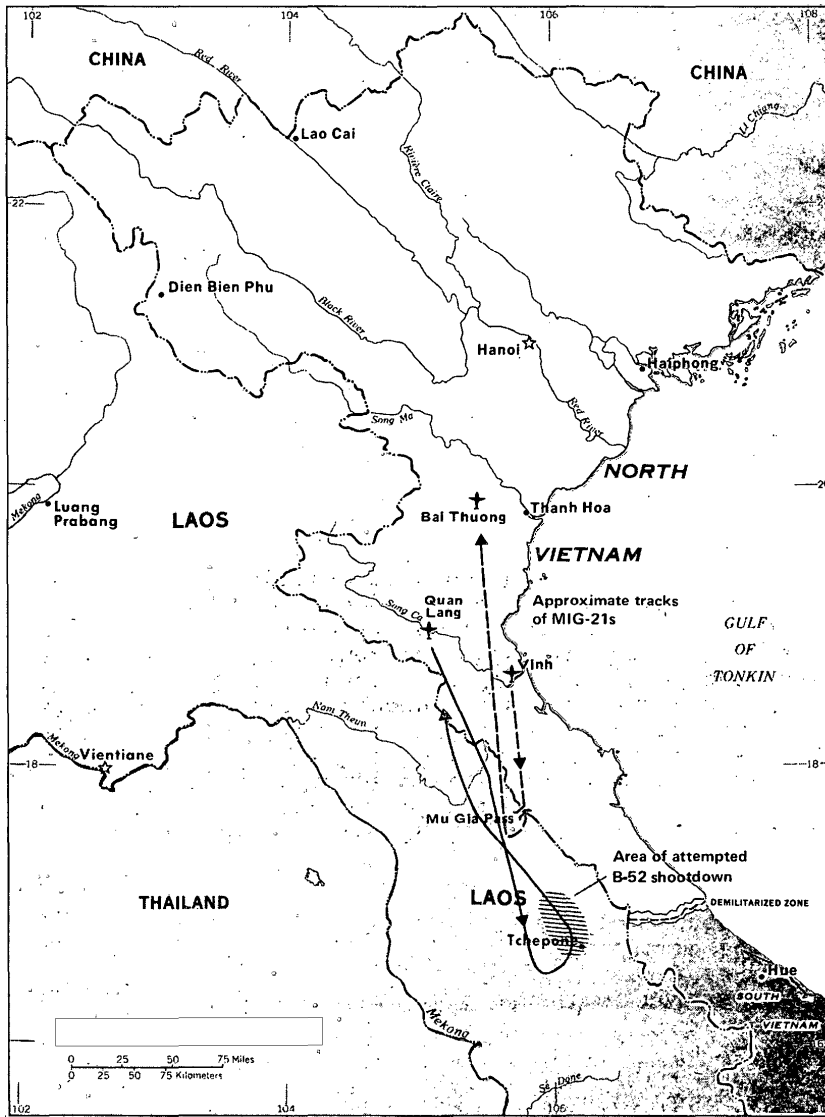
EGYPT

In remarks to Egyptian military units along the Suez Canal, President Sadat declared that "the time for the battle has come" because there was no longer any hope for a peaceful solution. He added that he had told the US representative in Cairo that there was "no more room for discussion" unless Israel were to respond positively to UN envoy Jarring's initiative of last February and would commit itself to complete withdrawal from the territory occupied during the June 1967 war.

Besides serving as a morale booster for the troops on the occasion of an important religious holiday, the speech was undoubtedly intended to create additional international pressures on Israel to move toward a settlement.

Also to this end Cairo is set to make a number of diplomatic contacts with other nations in advance of the debate on the Middle East question in the UN General Assembly some 10 days from now. At the UN, Egypt will seek a resolution that will call upon Israel to respond to Jarring's February initiative, although its first draft is likely to include language calling for sanctions and an arms embargo against Israel.

Despite Sadat's strong language to the troops, there is no indication that Arab military forces have been readying for imminent action.



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NOTES

North Vietnam: A MIG-21 has for the first time fired a missile at a US B-52 bomber over Laos. The MIGs entered Laos twice on 20 November, and at least one missile was fired at three B-52s over Tchepone. A near miss bounced one of the bombers around a bit but no damage occurred. As reported in The President's Daily Brief of 26 October, the North Vietnamese have been strengthening their air defenses in the southern part of the country, and more attempts such as the one on Saturday will certainly be made.

USSR: Part of the Soviet naval task group that has been visiting Cuba left Cienfuegos on Saturday. Three of the five ships in the group--an F-class diesel-powered attack submarine, a Kresta-class cruiser, and a Kashin-class frigate--put to sea after three weeks in Cuban ports and nearby waters; the visit may have been extended because of tropical storm Laura. The other two ships in the task group remain in Cuban waters--the tanker at Santiago and the second F-class submarine at Mariel, where we believe it is undergoing repairs.

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